



STATE SUPERINTENDENT JACK O'CONNELL

California Department of Education

High Performance High Schools Initiative

Improving High Schools From The Inside Out

"We can no longer limit the adult opportunities of our students because of our failure to provide them both challenges and support in high school... It's time to change high schools from the inside out."

- Superintendent Jack O'Connell

The Problem

Over the past five years, California's public high school enrollment has increased by 14 percent and is projected to increase a like amount over the next five years. Yet, less than 10 percent of our high schools have reached the optimum level of 800 on the Academic Performance Index, and on average, high schools have met their annual API growth targets only about 40 percent of the time. The majority of California's high school students are not reaching the academic levels needed to succeed in the workplace, in college or as effective citizens. Nearly two-thirds of high school students are not adequately prepared to enter college or transition to a career. There remains a huge mismatch between the high skilled technical jobs available throughout the economy, and the lack of individuals emerging from the education system with necessary academic and technical skills.

Solutions

State Superintendent Jack O'Connell is proposing a new High Performance High School initiative aimed at focusing high schools toward their primary role of preparing students for admission to college or transition to a career. O'Connell's High Performance High School Initiative will confront the challenge of improving high school performance and begin a process of fundamental change by:

IMPLEMENTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Require all students to take courses required for college entrance, known as "A-G" requirements;
- Increase the number of students enrolled in academically rigorous courses like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate programs;
- Encourage and assist high schools to expand successful college prep programs like AVID, Puente and career paths and academies;
- Provide early intervention so that struggling students can be prepared for postsecondary endeavors.

DEVELOPING WORLD CLASS TEACHERS AND SITE ADMINISTRATORS

- Give incentives to high schools to provide sustained, standards-based professional development;
- Mentor and support all beginning teachers and principals;
- Encourage school districts and universities to create leadership development programs to meet the need for qualified new principals;
- Make it easier to recruit qualified new principals from the business community.

DEVELOPING WORLD CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- Guide high schools toward standards-aligned instructional materials by a state “seal of approval.

SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS TO POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Assess and plan in middle school to identify students needing targeted intervention and those who are ready to accelerate into the high school curriculum;
- Expand career academies such as health, business, fire science, government, and manufacturing that allow students to explore careers, intern and prepare to continue their education in college or transition to employment;
- Implement CSU Early Assessment Programs, Early College High Schools, and written agreements or compacts to increase student access to postsecondary level options.

NURTURING AND DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT TO FOSTER HIGH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Promote community support to implement innovative programs and approaches;
- Include parents, businesses, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and public agencies;
- Convene a summit to focus on launching and implementing the high school initiative.

UNPRECEDENTED NEW FLEXIBILITY

- Block grant \$450 million in categorical programs to achieve the five goals of this High Performance High School Initiative.
- High schools electing to take the flexible block grant funds must meet academic targets in order to maintain the categorical flexibility.
- Targeted categorical programs are: Advanced Placement, Agricultural Voc Ed; BTSA,* Bilingual Teacher Training,* Class Size Reduction, Community Day School, Drop Out Prevention, Intersegmental Staff development, Instructional Materials Block Grant,* Math and Reading Professional Development,* Partnership Academies; Peer Assistance and Review,* School Library Materials,* Specialized Secondary Program Grants, Staff Development Day Buyout,* Tenth Grade Counseling, AVID, Principal Training Program,* Academic Volunteer Mentor Program,* After School Programs,* Gifted and Talented*.

(* = High School Portion of the funds)